



# Iowa Children's Justice

## Iowa Children's Justice Update

*To inform the courts and other interested members of our state community, Iowa Children's Justice will send out periodic information about issues and activities related to Juvenile Court.*

### **Permanency** **December 2008**

December Topic Permanency	<p>Permanency for children includes establishing a safe, stable and permanent living environment as well as creating or maintaining a permanent relationship between children and caring adults that is expected to last life-long.</p> <p>The federal Child &amp; Family Service Review (CFSR) expects that an appropriate permanency goal is established early in the child's involvement with the child welfare system and that this goal will match the child's needs and circumstances at each point in his/her life. When a child's circumstances change, it is expected that the permanency goal must also be changed in a timely manner.</p>
Why is permanency important?	<p><b>Permanency</b> for children is critical to positive child and family outcomes. To become a psychologically healthy human being, research indicates that a child must have a relationship with at least one adult who is nurturing, protective, and fosters trust and security over time. <b>Connection</b> with a caring adult who is devoted to and unconditionally loves a child is the key to helping that child overcome the trauma of abuse and neglect. The <b>stability</b> of relationships is important because consistency of care giving is directly impacts a child's ability to trust, love and cope. Repeated moves compound the adverse consequences of abuse and neglect.</p>
What contribution can judges make to facilitate permanency?	<p>Timely court hearings and reviews promote timely permanency. The 2006/07 Children's Justice Assessment has shown that implementation of the one judge/one family model has strengthened judicial leadership resulting in noticeable improvements in the timeliness and quality of hearings. Judges who are familiar with a family's case, and are in a position to provide leadership by actively managing the case, setting clear expectations regarding behavior, attendance, quality of representation, quality of information and timeliness of reports can positively affect both permanency and stability.</p>
Things to consider	<p>Some things to consider asking attorneys, guardians ad litem, and caseworkers about permanency for children include:</p> <p><b>Timeliness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the goal ahead of or on track with ASFA guidelines?</li><li>• Have there been multiple continuances? How can these be avoided?</li><li>• If not, what needs to be done to overcome the barriers to timely permanence?</li></ul> <p><b>Appropriateness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do we know that this most appropriate permanency goal for this child?</li><li>• In what ways does this goal match the child's needs and circumstances?</li><li>• How do we know that this placement will remain stable and permanent</li></ul> <p><b>Connections</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is this child's placement close enough to the child's home to promote reunification, or visits with parents and family members?</li><li>• Can the child stay in his/her same school while in this placement?</li><li>• Is the child placed with siblings?</li><li>• What efforts are being made to promote the child's relationship with parents?</li></ul>

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For more information  
about Permanency

For more information about permanency please contact Krys Lange at  
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For more information  
on Iowa Children's  
Justice

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